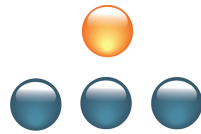




Shownotes

The “I” in DiSC®



[Blog Post]

This is the second of four shows giving a high-level overview on how to communicate with different behavioral styles at work, part of the DISC model we've been discussing. Last month we covered the D in DISC. Today, we cover the I or Influencer in detail.

[Cast]

The last time, we talked about high D's. Let's follow the same pattern we did last time, but talking about High I's. Let's talk about how you spot them, and we'll talk about clues -- verbal, visual, vocal clues, and we'll talk about how to communicate more effectively with high I's in specific and in general, and then in terms of delegating feedback, coaching and reporting.

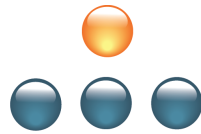
1. How To Spot A High I

- a. Verbal Clues
- b. Vocal Clues
- c. Visual Clues

2. How To Communicate More Effectively With A High I

- a. Delegating
- b. Feedback
- c. Coaching
- d. Reporting To A High I

1. How To Spot A High I. Some examples of high I's are Willard Scott, the famous heavysset weatherman from the Today Show from many years ago. Muhammad Ali, outgoing, cheerful and a little bit boastful at times. Bill Clinton, a classic high I. Everybody who ever meets Bill Clinton says he just has absolutely magnetic personality,

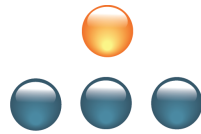


totally focuses in the person, friendly, great eye contact, those kinds of things. Katie Couric, the bouncy, lively co-host with Matt Lauer in the Today Show, is a classic high I.

They are energetic, they are outgoing, they are people persons. They are sales people, fraternity presidents, sorority presidents, the club leaders. Voted to most likely to succeed, not because they had the highest grades, but because they were most well-known and they play a couple of sports and they also did good in school. They have the best rolodexes of anybody. They know everybody. They are a connector in Malcolm Gladwell's book, The Tipping Point. They don't have necessarily expertise, they just know lots of people. They are the classic example of the Six Degrees of Separation. High I's are the kind of people that if you know a lot of high I's, you're only going to have two degrees of separations because they know thousands of people as opposed to hundreds.

High I's are the kind of people that think out loud. They're very comfortable. They want to see the facial expressions of other people when they think, "Hey, let me just think out loud here for a... Let's throw ideas and pin them to the wall and see what sticks." They actually don't care as much about ideas that they do about half-hour they really spend chatting, drinking coffee and eating donuts and talking about the ideas. They hate their desks. They prefer to stroll around the office. They love talking to everybody. They like informal chats, so if your boss is constantly chatting you up informally, but never sends emails or never follows up and so on -- a good chance that he or she might be a high I.

And even though other people, particularly high D's and even more so high C's, might see a high I as kind of avoiding work, they always seem to do well. It's because if you know a lot of people, you can either delegate to a lot of folks or you can have friends help you at various times and return the favor. I's are very good at giving favors and getting favors. But it's very possible that instead of avoiding the work that you think



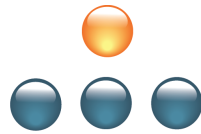
they're avoiding, they are building coalitions. They're sneaking alliances with people, and they're delegating or definitely agreeing to help other people.

They love your approval. They seek it. They're the ones that if they're making themselves look good in the bathroom in front of the mirror, when they come out the first thing they ask is, "How do I look?" And there's no joke about high I's, they're famous for saying, "Well, enough about me. What do you think about me?"

They want to be friends with people whom they work. A high C doesn't necessarily want to be your friend. He wants you to be professional and do what you're supposed to do, when you're supposed to do it. The high C's are the engineers and the accountants. They tend to be task-focused and reserved. They tend to like correctness, accuracy, following a timeline. They like rules. They want a rule book and they don't really like change, but they're very, very good at marching to a steady beat and delivering things day-in, day-out like clockwork.

The high I wants to be the friend of the high C, and the high C's kind of like, "What? Why do you want to be my friend? I don't get paid to be your friend, just do the work." And the high I says, "Why would I want to do work if I can hang out and be friends and get paid?"

a. Verbal Clues. They love to tell stories. In fact, Monday morning, from 7:00 AM or 8:00 AM until 11, the high I's loves saying, "Oh, I've got to tell you..." They're waving their hands in front of you, "I've got to tell you. You're not going to believe what happened to me this weekend. Oh, you're not going to believe who I ran into. Oh, I was at the mall and..." Or, "You know, I went to a movie and I was in line and..." And suddenly you're 15 seconds into a conversation with him, but you're actually two minutes into their story because they're talking so fast.



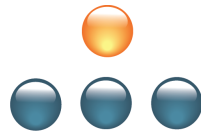
In fact, I's have an interesting habit that a C would explode if they tried to do. They don't actually tell you a fact. They don't try to prove anything. If somebody says something, they say, "Oh, I know that's true because I have one particular anecdote that proves it." High I's love those stories.

High I's love to watch the news. They love watching the celebrity news and they love hearing about what's going on, and any kind of tear-jerker story, a high I is just absolutely choked up. So, they love stories, they love telling anecdotes. It's always a dead giveaway. "I can't wait to tell you, I can't wait to tell you..." "This will take a minute, just bear with me." "Long story short." "Oh, sorry, too late." Those are classic high I phrases.

They are very comfortable sharing with you how they feel. If you go up to a high I, even if you're a high C and say, "Hey, what do you think?" They'll give you a minute and a half.

Most high I's know they're going to be wrong sometimes. It's not as if they need to be right. In fact, they're OK with you disagreeing with them because then they'll think, "Oh, good. We've got a five-minute discussion here to try to figure out how we can get to the same middle ground." They're very open, very comfortable sharing how they feel, "Oh, gosh, I'm so sorry about this." In fact, they often use feeling, emotion words when talk about... Or "I'm so sorry I'm late with this report", "Gosh, I just feel terrible that I'm behind on this." And the high C kind of goes, "I really... Bless your heart, but I don't care how you feel, I want the report."

They ask "who" questions. They're not going to want to know what the deliverables and deadlines and dates are, they'll want to know, "Who else is on my team?" They focus more on the people versus the process or even the what.



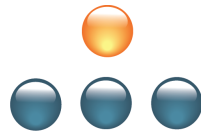
They see the world as people and the work just happens to be attached to people.

They have very relaxed and informal speech patterns. Generally, vulgarity is not something that professionals do in the workplace, but if there are people who tend to use sort of quasi-vulgarity or use a lot of idioms or slang like "Holy molly" or "You've got to be kidding me" or "Geez, I cannot believe this." Whereas a high C might say, "I disagree" or "I think you're off on that one." Whereas, the high I's look at the data and goes, "What, are you nuts?" And the high C goes, "I have problems with this." They both mean the same thing and they express it completely differently, and that's why we're talking about verbal cues. Lots of colloquialism, a lot of modern terms.

D's and I's both tend to be assertive, more forceful than S's and C's, there are a lot more D's and I's in top levels of corporations than there are S's and the C's. While there's a pretty equal distribution among the average person, it's not so at the top. It takes assertiveness. It takes boldness. It takes risks in order to get that high. The I's take risk based on the people that they have around and they build a great team. The D's take risks because they know they're right and they're willing to go through many obstacles to get it done.

Not only do high I's know everybody's names within 100 yards of them in the cubicle farms that so many people work in, they know the names of their spouses, they know the names of their kids, they know the names of their dogs and their cats. The high I knows you, cares about you and so absolutely uses names of people and animals that are important to you.

They love to go on tangents. They love to backtrack in conversations and they say, "Well, I just got to take us on this little side road a minute... Just a minute,



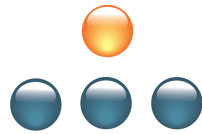
I've got to tell you this great story and then we'll come right back here. I know we don't have a lot of time, but when I get to the end of the story, I guarantee you'll know it'll be worth it." And they get done and maybe they kind of threw an air ball and they go, "I'm so sorry, but you'll forgive me, won't you?" And they smile and chuckle and they're OK with it. Time is a very loose concept for high I's. It's all about face-time with people.

b. Vocal Clues. High I's use a lot of inflection. They go up high. They go down low. They pause. They're dramatic. They feel like they're actors and that's why they all joke that high I's and actors often say, "Enough about me, what do you think about me?" They tend to vary their pitch and pace. They tend to talk louder and faster.

High I's like to talk loud. They like to talk fast. They use lots of exclamation points, "Oh, I got to tell you!" And they're willing to run over when somebody else is talking. High I's says, "Stop talking while I'm interrupting." A high D does that too, but a high I does it with a smile on his face. They have to say what they're going to share with you will change your life.

High I's are very comfortable laughing. I's also tend to interrupt people. When an S or C starts withdrawing because the I naturally starts interrupting, he doesn't mean to be rude, he's just engaging in a clever and exciting dialogue. He's jumping in to fill the void. And the S and C continue to step back. What ends up happening is an I comes away from the conversation going "that was great," and the S and C just feel like that was awful. They felt like they were treated poorly.

c. Visual Clues. High I's have firm handshakes and give lots of handshakes. They pat you on the shoulder and shake your hand as your walking off. They are



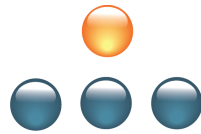
classic politician running for office. They hug friends. They'll do the double handed handshake, which is usually professionally a big no, no.

They make a lot of facial expressions, they're not clownish, but they are very willing to raise their eyebrows and big smiles and tilt their head one way or another, and close one eye and pretend to be a pirate when they're making a strong point. Lots of smiling, eyebrows going up and down. If they can raise one eyebrow and then the other eyebrow, they will.

They love to dress modern and a little bit flashy, a lot of bright colors. They're very comfortable wearing white, bright pink and green and so on, even in the dead of winter. A lot of coordinated colors, a lot of the latest fashions. High I's tend to love fashion, paying attention to what the stars are wearing and buying the latest brands and so on. High I's like to be looked at, and in our culture, brand association, high-end brands or something, or some way or ways that will get you noticed. And so, if you see somebody in the office who tends to associate that way, that's a clue maybe that they're a high I.

I's love brainstorming sessions. They don't care whether or not it actually gets done, they just want, "Hey, let's throw some ideas up and see what sticks. That would be great." Or, "Gosh, wasn't that fun?" And the C's back, they're going, "OK, let's rank order them. Let's pick the top three, let's assign task and let's come back in three days and see what we've done." And the I is like, "Yeah, whatever. Who wants coffee?"

They use big gestures. High I's will gesture outside the line of their shoulders, above their neck, below their waist all over the place. They'll waive their arms like windmills. They'll reach out and push you to make a point. They'll run around in circles just to show what their dog did before it goes to bed. They'll



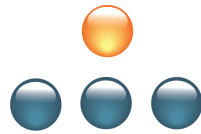
pantomime. They'll role play. They'll play act. That kind of stuff. They love gesturing.

2. How To Communicate More Effectively With A High I. First of all, you want to approach them informally. If you come in, if you walk over to their cube and you drop 50 pages of notes on their desk and say, "Look, I'd like you to read this and get back to me." Their eyes will roll up in their head and be like, "Sure, yeah. Whatever." As soon as you've gone, they'll open a drawer and slide it into the drawer, then close the drawer. And three days later, when they open the drawer, it'll be magically be gone. So, approach him informally. "Hey, can we chat a bit?"

High I's love to be praised, publicly or privately. "You look nice today." Or "I sure enjoy being your friend" or "Thanks a lot for stopping by, I really appreciate it." Saying "thank you," showing them that you appreciate what they've done. Complimenting them on something, they love that. Now, if you do that to high D, you're sucking up. It's not appropriate.

Relax. Don't be afraid to start off with talking about the weekend, to literally say to yourself, "I'm going to talk to a high I. I'm going to go over and say 'Hey, how was your weekend?'" And they're going to give you five minutes' worth. Everything they did and the stores they went to. The high I wants to share and expects you to share the same thing. If you want to get something from them, you've got to be willing to answer that question and say, "Oh, hey, by the way, where are you on Project X?" And they'll say, "Oh, I'm here. This and this da, da, da, da." So, mix the work in with the weekend, mix the work in with the family. Ask them how they feel rather than saying, "What do you think?" High I's are very comfortable of sharing their feelings.

Here's an overview if you want someone's opinion on something:

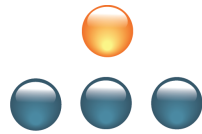


- For a D you say, "What would you recommend?"
- For an I you say, "How do you feel about this?"
- For an S you'd say, "How do you think this will play? What feedback are we going to get from other people?"
- And from a high C, "What's your opinion?" or "What do you think?" or "What do these facts lead you to believe?"

They love public recognition. A little bit of humor with high I's works, and they love enthusiasm. They will absolutely judge your focus, your abilities based on the energy you bring to particular projects. So, if you come over and you're pretty low key because you're thinking pretty intently about this, they're going to think, "This is not extreme, this is not exciting. I don't want to be involved." **So you have to step it up a notch in terms of energy and enthusiasm if you're a D or S or a C, in terms of working with high I's.**

a. Delegating. What about for delegating? So now, we're talking about Mike delegating to Mark. Mike's the high D and Mark is a high I. If Mike is going to delegate to Mark, Mike shouldn't come in and again drop 50 pages on Mark's desk. Mike might want to say, "Hey, stop by later, I want to give you a little heads up about a project that's coming down. Just give you a whiff of it." Then brainstorm together with him.

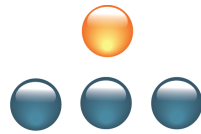
Don't give the details early on. Don't say, "Here are two pages. I want you to read through this, come back to me with a project plan." It's not going to work. You want to get a High I involved early so you can spread out a little bit of the briefing process. Don't hand something to a High I at the last minute, unless they can talk to anybody and to leverage as many people as needed.



You want to stay away from specific step-by-step instructions. You probably want to help them prioritize because they're people-focused, not task-focused. They tend to let deadlines slip. They're not as tied on time as D's and C's tend to be and so it's absolutely reasonable for you to say, "You know I'm not going to give you any specific guides about how to do this. I trust that you're going to come up with good solution." You can ask for updates by a certain time. You should expect they won't love that, but that's absolutely reasonable to make sure that the project doesn't slip. If you don't check on high I's on a 10-week project, you're going to get nine weeks of green followed by one week of red.

b. Feedback. When you get to step three of the model, here's what happens. "OK, may I give you some feedback?" "Sure, go ahead, Mike." "Hey, Mark, when you do this, here's what happens..." Here's what happens, the positive or negative feedback, affirming or adjusting feedback should be about their activities effect on their popularity and prestige, how it affects how other people see them, about how it makes their team look. Show them how others will view their work positively or negatively.

The fact that the project was late and it had cost overruns, it affected the bottom line of the corporation, that's not as important as that people thought poorly about them or their influence. You want to say, "Hey, you know what, Mark, you're one of my best guys, I really appreciate you and when you do this, here's what happens that's not so great." Smile a lot. It's OK to say, "Hey, you know what, you're one of my best guys. Don't worry about this and when you do this here are the bad things that happen. Can I count on you to do that differently, and what makes you do differently next time?" And if they laugh and go, "Gosh, I'm really sorry I did that." A little bit of stroking is a big positive. The D doesn't need to be stroked. The D's just needs to know that his new plan is going to work.

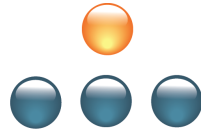


c. Coaching. When you look at the coaching model, there are six or seven steps around that circle. Don't give a High I all seven steps all at once. One step at a time. "Hey look, I want to work with you on this. Let's talk about it. Let's agree we're going to move in the right direction." "They wanted to think about that for a while, we'll talk about it later." And you might have two or three brief two or three-minute conversations within the course of the day that leads them to where you need them to go, rather than sitting them down and saying, "I'd like to give you an eight-week project plan for what you're going to do."

Generally, give them smaller goals and, in terms of deadlines, you want to be checking on them quite frequently. If you're going to recommend a book, recommend a book and talk about how the author is really well-known.

d. Reporting To A High I. Show the High I how what you do makes them look good. Pay attention to what it is that is important to them and show them the value of what you do in terms of them. "Hey, listen, I work on this project and I think that will help you with this guy over here. I think it will help you with your boss. I think it will help you with that project team." Not so much in terms of budget issues or results, but more in terms of relationships. You definitely want to know who your boss' friends are if he or she is a high I. You don't want to write a long email at the end of the day or even at the beginning of the day. I's will not read attachments, and if it's an Excel spread sheet, they not only won't read it, they'll break out in hives if it actually gets open in front of them.

But they'll pick up the phone. So, you need to brief them verbally and then follow up with the note to tell them what you told them. Just a two or three sentence or a four or five sentence, two paragraphs email, not long. If you're to



address an email to a high I, start with their name and end with yours. If you look at emails, High I's are the ones that have the smiley faces in their emails.

If you have a high I as a boss, anything you can take off his or her desk that is routine, that's boring, that's administrative, will be viewed well. "Hey listen, you don't need to be doing that. You need to be creating relationships so that we can leverage some of this work we're doing. Why don't you let me do that? I'll take care of the reporting for you. I'll take care of that project plan for you." If you're a high C or a high S and you can be supportive or detail-conscious and support of a high I to make him or her look better, awesome.

Wrap Up

1. How To Spot A High I

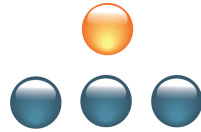
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2. How To Communicate More Effectively With A High I

- a. Delegating**
- b. Feedback**
- c. Coaching**
- d. Reporting To A High I**

DiSC is all about communicating more effectively, and Horstman's first law is "It's all about people." Horstman's second law is "More communication is better." When you're in France, you speak French. When you're with an S, you speak in high S. If you're with a high I, you speak high I.

[Further Information On This Topic]



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